

Conducting a Customer Satisfaction Survey¹

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The 1988 study for the Florida Board of Regents recommended that Extension periodically measure customers' satisfaction with information obtained from calling or visiting the Extension office. Similarly, the Florida Innovation Group, a nonprofit organization that assists county and city governments, advocates using customer satisfaction survey results to assess the performance of local departments such as the county Cooperative Extension Service. More recently, provisions in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 include the use of customer satisfaction measures as a key component of performance measurement. Given the emphasis on assessing customer satisfaction, the Florida Cooperative Extension Service is expanding the use of customer surveys now.

A survey of customers' satisfaction can help county agents find ways to improve program quality and information delivery and, more importantly, can help in the ongoing process of program accountability. Further, a survey helps answer questions about what difference our programs make in the community. Support for our programs is enhanced when we show that our customers are satisfied and are using our information. This fact

sheet provides step-by-step procedures for conducting a customer satisfaction survey.

Focus of Survey

The survey examines two groups of customers: 1) those seeking educational information by coming to or calling the Extension office and 2) those participating in planned Extension programs. Though customers attending meetings, demonstrations and other educational events were not included in earlier studies, these customers represent a significant segment of Extensions outreach effort. Their opinions are needed to more fully assess Extensions impact. Educational information sought could fall into the program areas of agriculture, natural resources, homeowner horticulture, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, Sea Grant, energy, community development or other appropriate areas. Information providers could be county agents, program assistants, trained volunteers or staff.

The survey examines two levels of evidence from the perceptions of Extension clientele:

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1. This document is AEC 356, one of a series of the Agricultural Education and Communication Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October 6, 2000. Revised August 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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- Customer reactions
- Customer practice changes

These levels of evidence are fully explained in Bennett's (1979) monograph on program evaluation titled *Analyzing Impacts of Extension Programs*.

Overview of the Survey Process

Customer contact data is collected during a one-month period. Follow-up information is then collected via telephone interviews. A summary report is completed and distributed to the Dean for Extension, county advisory committee members, interested volunteers, faculty and staff.

Steps in Implementing the Survey

1. Assemble the survey team.
2. Collect customer contact data.
3. Select a random sample of customers for the survey.
4. Mail a postcard alerting customers about the survey.
5. Conduct interviewer training for staff and volunteers.
6. Call customers and complete a Customer Satisfaction Survey instrument for each person.
7. Send the completed surveys and call sheets to the Program Development and Evaluation Center for analysis.
8. Summarize survey results and prepare a report.

A suggested timeline for conducting the customer satisfaction survey is shown in Table 1.

Assembling the Survey Team

A survey team of 5 to 10 persons should be assembled to include the County Extension Director, agents, and a few key volunteer leaders and/or members of program advisory committees.

Once assembled, the team should meet to discuss and clarify survey procedures, especially the following:

- Use of the interview instrument and interviewing techniques
- Timetable
- Data collection, sampling and reporting procedures

Procedure for Obtaining Customer Contact Data

Accurate customer contact data is required to generate an unbiased sample. Registration lists for planned educational programs, sign-in sheets for office visitors, and log sheets of information provided by telephone should be used to record all customer contacts during a 30-day period. If planned educational programs are not conducted in all of the major programming areas (e.g., agriculture, 4-H, family and consumer sciences), then registration lists for a 3- or 6-month period should be kept to allow the sample to be drawn from a more representative list.

At the time that educational information is provided, whether at a planned program or during a call or office visit, the following customer data should be obtained:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Nature of information provided

Examples of educational information given include, soil test results, advice on how to judge horses, bulletins on roses, nutritional counseling on low cholesterol diets, plan cost data on raising azaleas in containers, and pesticide information to control cockroaches in the home. Other information frequently given at the Extension office, such as meeting times and places, referrals to other public agencies, and information of a general nature, are not to be considered educational information.

Sample Selection

Thirteen counties are randomly selected for the annual customer satisfaction survey (CSS). In counties where more than one-quarter of the professional positions are vacant during the preceding year (with corresponding gaps in the capacity to meet customer needs), a replacement county is randomly selected. By randomly sampling 13 counties each year, each county participates in the customer satisfaction survey an average of one in every five years. This limits the burden placed on an individual county office.

Staff in each selected county are responsible for assembling a list of customers who: 1) attend a planned educational program, including workshops, seminars and field days; 2) visit the extension office to obtain information; or 3) telephone for information during a 30-day period. A systematic sample of at least 60 names is selected, half from the list of planned educational program attendees and half from the list of "walk-in" and telephone customers. Steps for selecting a systematic sample are described in *Sampling the Evidence of Extension Program Impact* (Israel, 1992). Sixty clientele are identified at the outset to guarantee usable responses from 40 to 50 persons. (See Table 1 for example.)

Mailing the Notification Postcard

One week before the telephone survey is scheduled to begin, the notification postcard should be sent to everyone in the sample. The postcard alerts customers to the survey, tells them why the survey is being conducted and asks for his or her cooperation (see below). The County Extension Director should sign each postcard in blue ink to personalize the card and, thereby, encourage customers cooperation (Salant and Dillman, 1994). (See sample postcard below.)

Dear Mr. Jones,

According to our records you participated in an educational program or contacted the Alachua County Cooperative Extension Office for information on youth entrepreneurship last month. We are interested in knowing how helpful the information was and will be calling next week to ask for your comments. Your

responses will help us find out what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Our questions will take only a few minutes, so please give us a hand. Thank you in advance for your help.

Cordially,

William L. Brown, Jr.

County Extension Director

Interviewer Training

Prior to beginning the telephone interviews, team members should review the role of the interviewer, role-play an interview to obtain a "feel" for how the interview will work and review the record keeping procedures for the survey. The county extension director should conduct a training session with the following components:

- A review of *Interviewer Information for the Customer Satisfaction Survey and Telephone Survey Guidelines* (shown later in the bulletin).
- Some general information about the survey

The county extension director should review what information the survey is designed to obtain and discuss the role of the interviewer, paying particular attention to maintaining confidentiality and control of the interview.

- An exploration of interview scenarios

Using the scenarios handout, the trainer should have a volunteer read a scenario and suggest a solution to the situation. Then discuss the pros and cons to this approach.

- A review of the fall back statements

Volunteers and agents pair-up to practice the fall back statements. Each person should practice answering questions or concerns from a "respondent" by having his or her partner read the issues listed in the fall back statement handout.

- A practice interview

The trainer should pair up people to practice the interview using the *Customer Satisfaction Survey form*. Each person should take a turn interviewing the other.

- A review of the forms

The trainer should demonstrate how the *Customer Satisfaction Call Sheet* form is filled out (see Table 3).

Future Action

County faculty, staff and advisory committee members can use the results of this survey to improve information delivery. County faculty also will have timely and cogent information to use for accountability purposes with county officials, which is particularly important in our state, where county government is a major financial contributor to the Florida Cooperation Extension Service.

The Dean for Extension and state faculty will have timely data to use in reporting on Extension's effectiveness to state and federal stakeholders. Further, the data and suggestions from the survey team will enable faculty to design training which improves information delivery through planned educational activities, over the telephone, and to customers who walk into the Extension office. Finally, the survey experience can help county faculty to formulate procedures for future assessments of Extension information delivery activities. (See Table 2.)

References

- Bennett, Claude F. 1979. *Analyzing Impacts of Extension Programs*. Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, ESC-575.
- Israel, Glenn D. 1992. *Sampling the Evidence of Extension Program Impact*. Florida Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, University of Florida. PEOD-5.
- Salant, Pricilla and Don A. Dillman. 1994. *How to Conduct Your Own*

Survey. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Interviewer Information for the Customer Satisfaction Survey

You are being asked to help conduct a random survey of county Extension clientele. Interviews will be conducted over the phone using names and numbers randomly selected from all of the customers who contacted Extension for information or participated in Extension programs during the selected month. Your role as interviewer is critical to the success of this project. This training will give you a better sense of the process, what to expect, and what is expected of you throughout the survey. Thanks for agreeing to help.

What is the Customer Satisfaction Survey? This survey has been commissioned by Extension Administration to help provide information required by the Board of Regents (State University System) and the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA, Florida Legislature) for public accountability. The survey asks questions about the customers experience and satisfaction with obtaining information from Extension, whether they have used the information and to what effect, and their demographic characteristics. The latter will help us understand whether we are serving all segments of our customer base equally well.

The survey will be conducted using telephone survey methods. When we conduct surveys, we often rely on a sample of customers for the information, rather than going through the time and expense for trying to contact each and every person who has obtained information from Extension (this could be thousands in your county). For this survey, approximately 60 people will be interviewed in each selected county. As long as our sampling method is random, that is, no person is more or less likely to be contacted, we can use statistics to make inferences to the total population. Thus, a list of customers was generated by keeping registration lists and sign-in sheets, and recording information during telephone consultations. This list will be the basis of our selecting people to interview.

When you agree to be an interviewer, you must also agree to follow some simple but important guidelines. The first and most important is to honor confidentiality. In order for surveys like this one to be successful, we must assure the respondents that their answers will be kept confidential. This means that you cannot identify the answers with a name or address. However, in a small community it may be possible that you know the person you are contacting. If this occurs, you must be committed not to disclose any information about that person to anyone.

As an interviewer, it is also important that you remain neutral. We want the respondent to answer the questions as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. Thus, you must be careful not to leave the impression that one answer is better than another, or that an answer given is silly or dumb. Be as neutral as possible so that we can accurately record the respondent's opinion. Here are some tips to help do that:

Read questions slowly and deliberately

- Ask all appropriate follow up questions, including ones which ask the respondent to explain or clarify an earlier response
- Read questions precisely as written
- Give no opinions
- Avoid reinforcements, but show interest
- Never suggest an answer
- Don't be mechanical (rather, be casual)

It is important that you, the interviewer, maintain control of the interview. Above all, it is important that you maintain your composure. You will come in contact with many different types of people. Most people will be easy to interview, but others will be shy or intimidated. Still others will be argumentative and combative. You cannot get into an argument on the phone. Nor can you hang up on the respondent. We will provide suggestions of what to say to difficult or reluctant respondents (see Fall Back Statements).

As in most things, your initial contact is very important. Read the statement at the beginning of the questionnaire to introduce yourself and the survey. Be as natural and smooth as possible (practice helps). You do not have to apologize for the call; it's better to make the person feel they are contributing to something important rather than suggesting it is unimportant with an apology. It is important to remember that a person can refuse to give an interview. We will offer suggestions as to ways to encourage people to respond, but don't be pushy or hostile. If a person refuses to cooperate, thank him or her and make note of it in the form provided. Likewise, it is ok for someone to refuse to answer a particular question, or not to have an opinion. In these situations we reread the question for the person or gently encourage him or her to respond, but the person does not have to answer if he or she does not want to. Don't force anything

It is important to interview everyone that can be contacted, so, if possible try to persuade each person to respond. A few suggestions of responses to excuses not to give an interview are listed in the Fall Back Statements handout.

Record keeping is important to keeping the survey process organized. Because consistent procedures must be used, we need to keep records of what we do each time we dial a telephone number. Call sheets are used to keep track of when a number is dialed, who makes the call, and what happens. This information is used, for example, to decide when to call again or to retire the number. When using the call sheet and survey forms, you should do the following:

- Write the date, time and your name on the call sheet before dialing a number.
- Write the disposition status on the call sheet after dialing a number.
- Confirm that the ID number is bubbled in on the questionnaire if the person started or completed the interview.
- Fill out the call back section on the call sheet if you started an interview, but were not able to complete it in one call.

- Fill out the call back section on the call sheet if the person cannot conduct the interview at the time you call.
- If the person does not want to give an interview, write the reason for the refusal in the notes section of the call sheet.

(See Table 3).

Customer Satisfaction Survey Call Sheet Disposition Status Categories

VALID CUSTOMER

Interview Completed

Call Back to Begin

Call Back to Complete

Respondent Refused

Interview Terminated, Incomplete

Not Eligible - Language Related, Deafness

No Answer, (after 7 rings)

No Answer, Answering Machine

Busy (after one redial 5 minutes later)

NOT A VALID CUSTOMER

Nonworking Number

Other Noncustomer

Tips for the Survey Coordinator

- Using the *Customer Satisfaction Survey Code Sheet* on page 17 of this bulletin, pre-code the survey forms. Fill in the information about the customers name, telephone number and the information obtained. Bubble in the ID number, County Code number, Program Area number and the Type of Contact on the survey form.
- Review the record keeping procedures and discuss procedures for handling problem situations with interviewers before starting the session.

- Give each interviewer 6-10 telephone numbers and three to five call sheets to use. Provide additional numbers as needed.
- Be sure each interviewer has a copy of the questionnaire form, fall back statements and call sheets.
- Provide a number 2 pencil for each interviewer to use for marking answers on the survey forms.
- Remind interviewers to ask for comments, especially for an explanation of what the person did and how it came out (for question 5).

Record Keeping

- Cross-check the ID number on the call sheet with the ID number on the completed questionnaire. Each completed survey should have the ID number bubbled in on the front page.
- Review the disposition of dialings on the call sheets for completeness. Be sure that busy numbers were re-dialed after five minutes and listed as a single dialing (not as a second or third dialing).
- When an interview is completed or telephone number is retired, mark a line through the box for that number on the call sheet. (Fluorescent yellow highlighter preferred)
- Check-in call sheets to make sure they have all been returned by the interviewers.

Processing Telephone Numbers

- Non-working numbers should be re-dialed immediately (a second time) to confirm that the number is ineligible.
- Check call sheets for a call back to a customer at a specific time.
- Vary the day of the week and time of day that follow-up dialings are made, e.g., if a number is not answered during the afternoon, then try an evening or Saturday morning dialing.
- Each number is retired after the fifth dialing is conducted, except when a call back is scheduled.

Check that follow-up dialings have been conducted for each number.

Checking in Completed Surveys

- Review survey forms for missing information (e.g., unmarked circles that should be bubbled in) or contradictory information (such as on question 5 with a respondent saying he or she had not used the information *and* it had solved the problem). Call back respondents to clarify the answer if necessary.

Telephone Survey Guidelines

1. Pick up Call Sheet with phone numbers

- Mark the date, time and your name on the call sheet before dialing a number
- Begin calling phone numbers
- Use disposition status categories to mark type of call
- Be sure to read questions exactly as written
- Try to complete each call that is a legitimate number

2. If the person answering refuses to do the interview

- Calmly try to talk them into completing the interview
- Don't argue or try to force the interview
- If the person does not want to give an interview, fill out the reason for the refusal on the call sheet

3. If the person cannot conduct the interview at the time you call

- Try to schedule another time and date for an interview
- Fill out the call back section on the call sheet
- Contact the person again at the time and date specified

4. If you started an interview, but were not able to complete it in one call

- Try to convince the person to complete the interview in one session
- If it is not possible, fill out the call back section on the call sheet and schedule another time and date
- Keep the partially completed questionnaire with the call sheet
- Contact the person to complete the interview

5. Make sure that you have filled in all the information for each call sheet before you turn it in to the survey coordinator

- Be sure to make follow-up dialings until you complete the survey
- Check that all answers are completely bubbled in the circles on the survey form

Interview Scenario Worksheet

Scenario 1. Suppose you dial a number and a young woman answers. You read the introduction to the survey and begin asking questions. After completing the first two questions of the survey, you hear a child crying in the background and the woman says she needs to go. How should you respond?

Scenario 2. Suppose you dial a number and a person answers. You introduce yourself, saying "My name is ... and I'm a volunteer for the _____ County Cooperative Extension Service. We are helping ..." At this point the respondent interrupts you and begins a tirade about how county government is wasting tax payers dollars. How should you respond?

Scenario 3. Suppose you dial a number and someone answers. You read the introduction to the survey and begin asking questions. You ask the question, "Have you had an opportunity to use the information?" At this point the respondent begins a long, rambling story about family problems. How should you respond?

Scenario 4. Suppose you dial a number and someone answers. You read the introduction to the survey and begin asking questions. You ask the question, “Did the information appear to be up to date and accurate?” The person replies, “I don’t understand what you’re asking.” How should you respond?

Scenario 5. Suppose you dial a number and after four rings, an answering machine turns on. Should you hang up or leave a message? If you decide to leave a message, what would you say?

Scenario 6. Suppose you dial a number and someone answers by saying, “Walmart; we are the low price leaders.” Since you are to interview Extension customers, what should you do?

Scenario 7. Suppose you dial a number and someone answers. You read the introduction to the survey and ask the first question, “If I have your permission, let me begin by asking did the information appear up to date and accurate?” The person responds that he doesn’t have time for the survey. How should you respond?

Scenario 8. Suppose you dial a number. After two rings, a recording is played. The recording says the number is not in service. Should you re-dial the same number? Why or why not?

Scenario 9. Suppose you dial a number and a person answers. You read the introduction to the survey and begin asking questions. After completing part of the survey, the connection is broken. What would be your “Plan A” and “Plan B” for dealing with this situation?

Scenario 10. Suppose you dial a number and a person answers. You ask to speak with _____. The person who answers the telephone says that the person you wish to speak to is not home. What should you do?

Interview Scenario Solutions

Scenario 1. Try to schedule a day and time for a call back to interview.

Scenario 2. Stress the importance of obtaining the person’s views. For example, you might say,

“This is a chance for your voice to be heard.” You might also stress that the survey will benefit everyone in the community. You should realize, however, that some will not cooperate.

Scenario 3. Be patient and try to redirect the person back to answering the questions. You might re-read the question and conclude, “Would you say yes, no or don’t know?”

Scenario 4. Restate the question because the respondent may not have heard it all. You might also say that you were instructed not to explain questions. You should encourage the person to respond as best he or she can.

Scenario 5. Leave a message introducing yourself and the survey. You should mention that you will call again.

Scenario 6. Say that you are surveying only Cooperative Extension customers and thank the person for his or her time. You might mention that you have dialed the wrong number and after hanging up, check the number or re-dial it to be sure that you did not dial the number incorrectly.

Scenario 7. Say that you understand how busy they are and it’s important to get an accurate cross-section of Extension’s customers. You also might mention that the survey will take less than 5 minutes.

Scenario 8. Yes, you should redial to confirm the number is not working.

Scenario 9. Your plan “A” should be to re-dial immediately to try to complete the survey. Plan “B” should be to schedule a call back.

Scenario 10. You should try to establish when the person for whom you are asking will be home for a call back.

Sample Fall Back Statements

WHAT’S THE SURVEY ABOUT?

This is a survey of the opinions of people who have used the _____ County Cooperative Extension Service to obtain information. We need to

find out what people like you think of our services in order to better understand how we can meet your needs.

WHAT IS THE SURVEY BEING USED FOR?

Your answers will be combined with those of other people to provide a summary of what people think about Cooperative Extension's services and how useful those services are in _____ County. This information will be shared with community leaders and University of Florida administrators for their use in planning programs that help people.

IF YOU REACH A BUSINESS OR OTHER NONRESIDENTIAL NUMBER

We are calling Cooperative Extension customers in _____ County about their opinions. Your number was dialed by mistake.

IF YOU REACH AN ANSWERING MACHINE

Hello. I'm a volunteer for the _____ County Cooperative Extension Service. I'm involved in a survey of the opinions of people who have used Cooperative Extension's services. I will try to reach you over the next few days because your opinion is very important to us. We would really appreciate your cooperation in participating in the survey.

IF IN DOUBT

You were chosen as part of a random sample of people in order to obtain their opinions. It's very important to learn how people feel about our services and the usefulness of the information that we provide.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS

I understand that you have a busy schedule but it's very important that we speak to busy people like yourself in order to get an accurate cross-section of people. We can do the interview at your convenience. How about tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock, or tomorrow evening at 8 p.m.?

HOW DID YOU GET MY TELEPHONE NUMBER?

Your number was randomly selected from registration lists at workshops and sign-in sheets at the Extension office. It is strictly by chance that yours was chosen.

HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THIS IS LEGITIMATE?

I would be glad to give you the telephone number of the County Extension Director, who will provide you with more information. The Director's name is _____. I am sure (s)he would be happy to talk with you. You can call him/her at the _____ County Extension Service office. The number is ____-____.

RESPONDENT WANTS TO BREAK OFF THE INTERVIEW

We have about ____ more questions. If you would like, I can read the questions a little faster.

OR

We have only a few more questions, if you'll just bear with me.

CALL BACKS

INTRODUCTION FOR A SCHEDULED CALL BACK

I'm _____ calling from _____ County Cooperative Extension office. You spoke with one of our interviewers (a few days/a week ago) and scheduled a call back to complete the interview. As you recall, we left off at the question on _____.

IF THE RESPONDENT IS RELUCTANT TO FINISH THE CALL BACK

We'd really appreciate your cooperation in (completing/doing) the interview we started. It will just take a few more minutes of your time.

REFUSALS

We try to get every valid interview, so, if possible, we will try to persuade each person to respond. A few suggested responses to reasons for refusing to give an interview are listed below.

TOO BUSY

This should take only a few minutes. Sorry to have caught you at a bad time, I would be happy to call you back. When would be a good time for me to call in the next day or two?

BAD HEALTH

I'm sorry to hear that. Have you been sick long? I would be happy to call you back in a day or two. Would that be okay?

TOO OLD

Older people's opinions are just as important in this particular survey as anyone else's. In order for the results to be representative for all the people that we serve, we have to be sure that older people have as much chance to give their opinion as anyone else does. We really do want your opinion.

DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO ANSWER

The questions are not all difficult. They mostly concern how you feel about the information that we provided and how useful it was. Some of the people we have already interviewed have had the same concern you have, but once we got started, they didn't have any difficulty answering the questions. Maybe I could read just a question or two to you and you can see what they are like.

NOT INTERESTED

It's awfully important that we get the opinions of everyone in the sample, otherwise the results won't be very useful. So, I'd really like to talk to you.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Code Sheet

Before starting an interview, the ID number, County number, Program Area number and Type of Contact number should be bubbled in the blanks. Use the following:

ID Number. Each survey should be numbered sequentially, beginning with 001, followed by 002, 003, etc. Bubble all three columns for the ID number on each survey.

County Code Number. Use the two-digit number which corresponds to your county from the following:

District I

Bay 20

Calhoun 21

Escambia 22

Franklin 23

Gadsden 24

Gulf 25

Holmes 26

Jackson 27

Leon 29

Liberty 30

Okaloosa 31

Santa Rosa 32

Wakulla 34

Walton 35

Washington 36

District II

Alachua 60

Baker 61

Bradford 62

Clay 82

Columbia 64

Dixie 42

Duval 84
Gilchrist 43
Hamilton 44
Jefferson 28
Lafayette 47
Levy 49
Madison 50
Nassau 88
Suwannee 55
Taylor 33
Union 76
District III
Brevard 80
Citrus 41
Flagler 85
Hernando 45
Lake 70
Marion 71
Orange 72
Osceola 73
Putnam 91
St Johns 92
Seminole 94
Sumter 75
Volusia 95
District IV
DeSoto 65
Hardee 67

Highlands 69
Hillsborough 46
Indian River 86
Manatee 51
Okeechobee 89
Pasco 52
Pinellas 53
Polk 74
St Lucie 93
Sarasota 54
District V
Broward 81
Charlotte 40
Collier 63
Dade 83
Glades 66
Hendry 68
Lee 48
Martin 87
Monroe 96
Palm Beach 90
Seminole Tribe 97

Program Area number. Use the number which corresponds to the type of planned educational program attended or information provided:

- 0 = Natural Resources
- 1 = Commercial Agriculture
- 2 = Homeowner Horticulture
- 3 = Family & Consumer Sciences

4 = Family Nutrition Program (FNP)

5 = EFNEP

6 = 4-H

7 = Sea Grant

8 = Energy

9 = Community Development

Type of Contact . Bubble in the blank which corresponds to the type of contact: office visit, telephone call or planned educational program.

Extension Helps Solve Sunshine County's Problems; Customer Satisfaction High

The Sunshine County Cooperative Extension Service provides county residents with programs on a wide variety of useful, timely topics, including environmental landscape management, hurricane preparedness, child development, and financial planning. The county Extension office is also a resource for residents to call or visit to get answers to individual questions. As part of its ongoing effort to improve program quality and information delivery, the Sunshine County Extension office recently surveyed customers about their satisfaction with services provided.*

Whether the customers attended a workshop or a demonstration, called on the phone, or dropped by the office, they were impressed by the quality of the information Extension provided. Several customers indicated that the information Extension provides has always met their expectations. One said, "My questions have always been answered promptly and thoroughly." Another said, "I always turn to the county office when I have a question about my garden. They always give me information that I can really use."

At the time of the survey, nearly two-thirds of the customers, 64%, had had the opportunity to use the information Extension provided. Some customers said that they were still in the process of using the information they had received, that they were waiting for crops to mature or had signed up for a class that

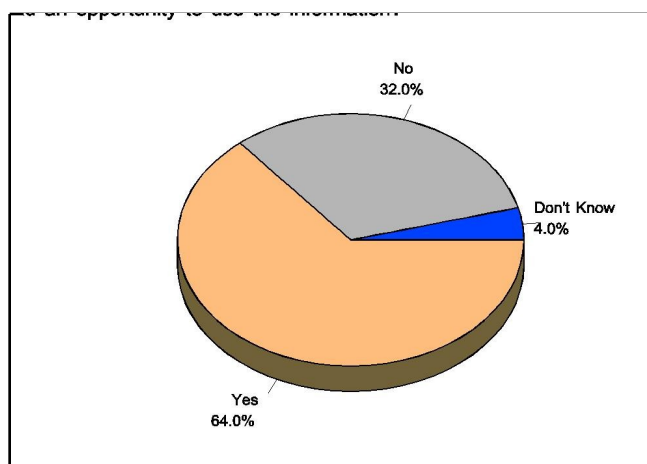


Figure 1. Had an opportunity to use the information?

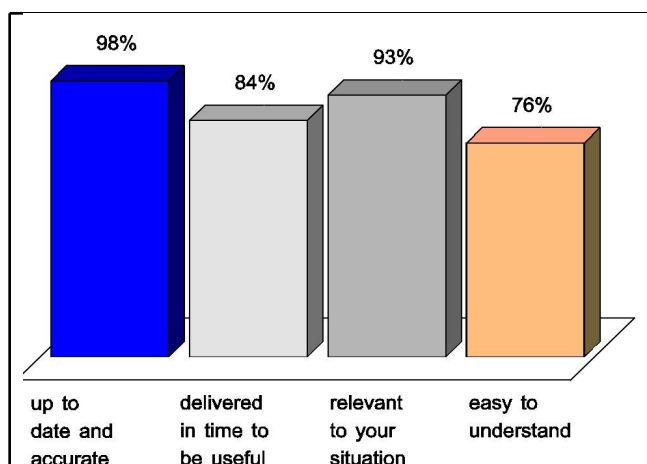


Figure 2. The information was...

started later in the year. Of the customers who had not used the information, some said they had not had a chance to read the literature, while others planned to use the information in the coming months.

Most of those customers indicated that the information worked for them: 91% said they had learned new information, developed a new practice, or solved a problem. For example, armed with Extensions recommendations, customers were able to get rid of fire ants and termites, buy plants appropriate for their landscape, adjust soil pH, can and pickle vegetables, and reduce household energy use. One customer, having followed Extensions instructions in planting zucchini for the first time, said he "didn't expect them to get so big, as large as your arm."

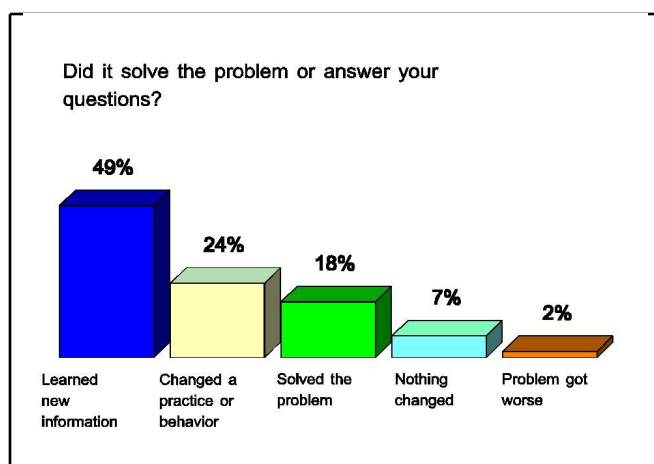


Figure 3.

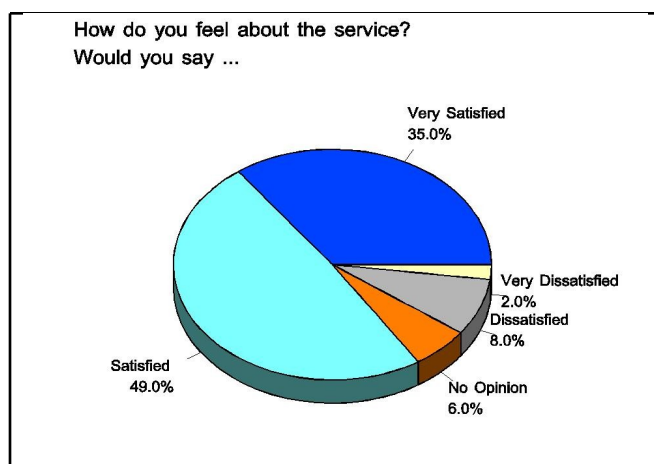


Figure 4.

Almost all of the customers surveyed, 84%, were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had received. Customers described the service as "excellent," "extremely cooperative," "very helpful," and "courteous." One customer exclaimed, "The service was great! The person I talked with was very patient while I played twenty questions." Another customer commented, "The agents and staff in the office frequently go above and beyond the call of duty, giving many extra hours of time to the children in 4-H and to others." Several customers said that the survey itself demonstrates Extensions interest in the customer and desire to improve service.

Customers in Sunshine County were very satisfied with the timely, useful information and friendly, competent service they received from the county Extension office. The feedback from this survey enables county agents to continue to improve their information delivery. It enables them to perform

consistently and build long-standing relationships with customers, the kind of relationship that prompted one customer to say, "I cant say enough good things about the Extension Service."

(Please see Figure1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4)

*Fifty customers, 25 of whom had participated in formal programs such as workshops or field days and 25 of whom had called or dropped by the office, were interviewed by telephone within two months of their contact with Extension. Survey Team members included John Trueblood, Chair, Sunshine County Advisory Committee, Susan Green, Master Gardener, Sam Smith, Livestock Advisory Committee, Deanna Jones, 4-H club leader, Mary Aster, County Extension Director, and Mark Smith, Agriculture Agent.

Table 1. Suggested timeline for a customer satisfaction survey.

Step	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Assemble the survey team														
2. Collect customer contact data														
3. Draw sample of customers														
4. Mail notification postcard														
5. Conduct interviewer training														
6. Call customers and complete interview														
7. Send surveys to PDEC for analysis														
8. Summarize results and prepare report														

Table 2. Sample of a completed call sheet.

ID# <u>057</u>	Telephone # <u>332-5080</u>		County <u>Alachua</u>	
Contact Attempt	Date (Month/Day)	Time	Disposition Status	Interviewer Name
1	11/17	8:00 p.m.	No answer	Joe Volunteer
2	11/19	4:15 pm.	Call back	Bill Brown
3	11/20	7:30 p.m.	Interview completed	Bill Brown
4				
5				
Call Back Schedule Time of call back appointment: 7:30 p.m. Day of call back appointment: 11/20 Reason for call back: Leaving for a doctor's appointment				
Notes:				

Table 3. Customer Satisfaction Survey Call Sheet

ID# _____	Telephone # _____		County _____	
Contact Attempt	Date (Month/Day)	Time	Disposition Status	Interviewer Name
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
Call Back Schedule Time of call back appointment: Day of call back appointment: Reason for call back:				
Notes:				